

Finding Rest

Peace and rest are about the last thing most people seem to be feeling these days. There is so much "stuff out there" pressing in on us that oftentimes it's difficult to just breathe. Busyness seems to be the 'spirit of the age.' And from most people I talk with, it's not working.

Whether during the holiday season or not, many people are feeling hectic, exhausted, burnt-out, worn-out, stressed-out, frantic, jumbled, agitated, tense, behind, anxious, frenzied, short-tempered, overloaded, overwhelmed, overworked, and under-paid.

Or is it just me?

Here are some things I've been thinking about stress and busyness recently. None of this is rocket science, but if we don't slow down to consider some basics in life, we will likely not become the people God intended us to be.

- **I need to care for my heart.** This life isn't all about me and what I need, but if I neglect my own heart, I won't be in a position to offer others what they really need. Your heart matters. How are you caring for your heart these days?
- **Busyness does not necessarily equal effectiveness.** Contrary to the thinking of most people and the staff at most churches, bigger-better-more is usually not what people need or want. Are you overloading volunteers with too much programming that instead of finding more life they are actually being crushed and dying? Have you taken on too much in your own life?
- **Moving away from busyness requires saying "no".** People won't like it, especially if they've gotten used to you saying "yes" to everything all the time. Think carefully before saying "no" to your boss or spouse or friends, but surely each of us has at least one thing we could say "no" to this week to give us some relief. What is one thing you could cut out to simplify your life this week?
- **There is a difference between being active and being too busy.** It feels good to be productive, to lay my head down at night (or morning for some of you) knowing I've put in a good day's (or night's) work, but that's different than scurrying around, frantically trying to "get things done." Is your life running you? Do you find yourself jumping from one fire to the next? How could you be more intentional with your life?
- **There is power in "focus".** Sometimes being too busy in too many things means that I never really make a significant impact anywhere. When I spread myself / my time / my thoughts / my energy so thin, my effectiveness goes way down. Even for people who "do better when they're busy" - there seems to be a break-even point at which quality of work declines. What would your life look like if you were able to focus more intensely on one or two core areas?

What is God saying to you about the pace of your life?

Are you using busyness as an excuse, a way to avoid one or more core issues in your life?

How would your relationships and productivity change if you learned to slow down a bit?

"My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken."
Psalm 62.1-2

*May we be filled with the rich life of Christ,
more now than ever before.*

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